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Vancouver single mom sues province over legal aid
metroNEWS

Your essential daily news | THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2017 High 13°C/Low 6°C Mixed

Attack ads come to life

BC Votes 2017

Personal jabs take centre stage at fiery leaders' debate

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Edmonton

The nasty, personal tone of British Columbia's campaign continued Wednesday evening during the election's only televised leadership debate.

Liberal Leader Christy Clark, NDP Leader John Horgan and Green Leader Andrew Weaver spent the hour attacking each other's characters during a debate high on tension but light on policy when the three contenders were allowed to interact.

Horgan — who had promised to be harder on the incumbent Liberals during this campaign than predecessor Adrian Dix's failed run in 2013 — set the mark from the very first debate question on housing, accusing Clark of ignoring the affordability crisis until it was too late.

"Why should anyone believe you now? You're always quick with a smile and a promise, but you don't deliver," Horgan told Clark as the two began talking over one another.

Later in the debate, Horgan — who was asked by moderator Jennifer Burke if he had anger-management issues — accused Clark of skipping question periods at the Legislature because "you'd rather watch the hockey game."

His tact was clear — to try and harness voter frustration after 16 years of Liberal governance in B.C.

"I think it's time that the BC Liberals' neglect ends," he concluded.

Clark fired back, accusing Horgan of being absent on the latest issue to rock the campaign trail: the U.S.'s proposed 20 per cent tariff on softwood lumber.

She repeatedly brought up reports that some NDP staff are being paid for by the United Steelworkers union (and that the party takes large donations from the union) as its U.S. chapter backs President Donald Trump's crippling plan.

"We all know why Mr. Horgan turtled when it came to softwood," Clark said. "It's because he's taking his orders from the union in Pittsburgh that's fighting for American jobs and standing beside Donald Trump when he calls our forest workers a disgrace."

Weaver pitched the Green party as the civil alternative, saying the party is above the "fear mongering" seen from the Liberals and NDP in this election.

But he wasn't above taking pot shots at his fellow debaters, particularly in heated exchanges with Horgan, who he tried to goad by asking "are you going to get mad at me too?"

Neither of the big parties, he said, deserve voters' trust.

"We need to put people first, rather than the corporate donors (on Clark's side) and the big union donors (on Horgan's)," Weaver said. "It's wrong."

With attack ads proliferating across the airwaves and both radio and television debates featuring plenty of flashpoints, the May 9 election is shaping up to be one of the nastiest in B.C. history.

ALL PHOTOS THE CANADIAN PRESS

Christy Clark, Liberals

John Horgan, NDP

Andrew Weaver, Greens

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metro NEWS

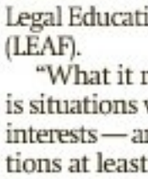
Your essential daily news

French or no French, Kevin O'Leary would still have been a leadership disaster **Views**

'I'm tired of being a victim'

COURT

Woman sues B.C. over legal aid ordeal



David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

Vancouver single mother Nicole Bell remembers when her ex-partner's abuse first started: She got pregnant with her second child — and learned it was a girl.

"He saw that as God's punishment of him," she told Metro in an interview. "Suddenly he had this sense of control over me — now that he gave me this baby that I wanted, I'd have to do whatever he wants.

"He became very physically and mostly sexually, verbally and psychologically abusive."

Now, the 31-year-old mother of two and social work student is spearheading a lawsuit against British Columbia's justice ministry and the Legal Services Society, the provincial agency that oversees legal aid.

On Wednesday afternoon, a B.C. Supreme Court case was filed on Bell's behalf — and a second woman, her identity protected by a publication ban, fleeing an abusive ex — by the West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF).

"What it really boils down to is situations where fundamental interests — and life-or-death questions at least in Nicole's context — are at play," said the organization's litigation director, Raji Mangat. "These are protected rights.… You have the right to be protected in terms of life, liberty and security of the person.

"They can't be offering legal aid in a way that, in some cases, puts women at more of a risk than they would have been otherwise.

Filed in conjunction with the B.C. Public Interest Advocacy Centre, it's the first case the women's non-profit has initiated, and argues that the province is discriminating against low-income women and endangering their right to safety and security in the way it restricts legal aid funding.

Despite maternity leave income that qualified Bell for low-income legal aid, she was rejected because of $8,000 of RRSPs; so she liquidated them and qualified for a state-funded lawyer.

She eventually got a one-year order, and full custody of her children, just before her legal aid hours ran out — the 25 hours B.C. allows in family cases. "I thought the nightmare was over," she said.

But after the one-year order expired, she said the RCMP phoned to warn her they'd received a report her ex had threatened to kill her. "He was waiting for all the court stuff to cool down," she said.

But since the source of the tip wouldn't file a complaint, the police could only warn her. She applied for legal aid again to ask for a permanent protection order against him.

She qualified financially, but said LSS told her she was out of luck a second time.

"They said he was abiding by his previous order set out in June 2014," Bell alleged, "and had previously provided me counsel at an extremely high cost.

Living on her credit cards only, she spent her student loans — $9,000 — to hire a lawyer at a "very discounted rate," and won one more year of protection.

The LSS did not respond to interview requests by press time.

Suzanne Anton, who until the election campaign began was attorney general, told Metro that in her time as justice minister the B.C. Liberals introduced a number of new initiatives that boosted women's access to family justice services.

In addition to funding Legal Services Society to the tune of nearly $75 million a year, there was an additional $30 million towards other initiatives such as mediation-based justice access centres, Anton said, and the appointment of a Provincial Office of Domestic Violence.

"There are a myriad of resources … not just legal aid through the Legal Services Society," she said in a phone interview. "The total matrix of resources for women is very extensive and it's very varied.

Asked why there is a 25-hour cap on family law legal aid, Anton defended LSS having to "operate within their budget."

"They are always figuring out the right balance between what income should get legal aid and what won't qualify any more, how many hours a person should get — in criminal cases, family cases, domestic violence cases," she said. "They're always doing a balancing act.

And the government has invested funds in initiatives offering "an alternative to court by facilitating access to collaborative processes such as mediation … to find the best ways to keep children safe," according to a statement.

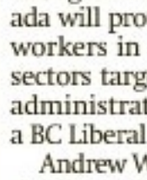
Bell said she's worried for her safety still, but is "really tired of hiding."

"I'm tired of being a victim," she sighed. "I'm ready to share my story and share my voice in hopes that it will be heard and help change the future for others."

Nicole Bell, a Vancouver mother of two pictured in the offices of West Coast LEAF women's law nonprofit, launched a constitutional challenge against the B.C. justice ministry and Legal Services Society on Wednesday. DAVID P. BALL/METRO

BC Votes 2017

Clark calls for ban on U.S. coal



Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

Premier Christy Clark says that she has written to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to ask the federal government to ban the shipment of thermal coal, including coal from the United States, through British Columbia.

The move comes two days after President Donald Trump announced import tariffs of up to 20 per cent on Canadian softwood lumber, reviving a long dormant but bitter trade dispute between Canada and the United States.

Thermal coal is low-quality coal used to make electricity in coal-powered power plants. Rail shipments of thermal coal pass through the Lower Mainland regularly from the United States, a practice denounced by some residents and politicians because of health concerns and the greenhouse emissions produced by coal-powered electricity generation. A ban on shipments of thermal coal would send "a strong message that BC and Canada will protect the interests of workers in forestry and other sectors targeted by the Trump administration," according to a BC Liberal Party press release.

Andrew Weaver, B.C.'s only sitting Green Party MLA, welcomed the call to ban coal exports.

In a statement to Metro, BC NDP leader John Horgan criticized Clark for failing to renegotiate the softwood lumber agreement sooner. The previous agreement expired in October 2015.

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Refugee groups combine forces

IMMIGRATION

Resources being shared to meet needs of asylum seekers

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

Faced with a "significant" rise in asylum seekers arriving in Vancouver, the city's leading refugee agencies are teaming up to find ways of working together to stretch their budgets which remain "essentially the same" as before the global crisis.

Chis Friesen, settlement services director with the Immigrant Services Society of B.C., estimated that 80 per cent of the nearly 300 refugee claimants his organization has served in just the first three months of 2017, arrived on foot across the border from the U.S. into B.C.

"There is an underground railroad that supports these individuals coming from abroad," he explained. "They just walk. Even individuals in wheelchairs have somehow crossed the grass to come into Canada, we're not quite sure how."

At a press conference on Wednesday at Welcome House, the city stepped forward with more than $180,000 in funding to five local organizations at the front line of welcoming refugees.

The mayor received direct thanks from an African refugee, Petros, who asked that his full name and nationality not be published for fear of reprisals against his family back home.

"I was not the same Petros, the same person, when I was here back in November 2016," he said. "I am a transformed person."

He said more support is needed for refugee-serving organizations — both financial, and improved tools and technology for their work — because they are "services that impact thousands of lives … (They) helped me a lot."

According to the Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST), more refugees hasn't translated into any increases in staff available to heal mental injuries many bring.

"As the needs are increasing, we do need to increase the resources we have available to meet those needs," said executive director Frank Cohn.

Announcing the city's funding, Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson said he hoped the multi-agency centre could be "a hub" for newcomers.

> **We all work within the same building now, so it's easy to make referrals and work together.**
> Mona Hassannia, manager of Settlement Orientation Services (SOS)

"As a city, given lots of us here have been refugees or immigrants to this city and ended up making this our homes," he said, "there's lots we can do at a local level."

But Friesen said the province needs to increase the social assistance rates it offers, which have been locked at $610 for a single person for a decade. Under those rates, also provided to successful refugee claimants like Petros, he is only allotted $375 for his housing costs, taken out of the $610.

"We are seeing a lot more vulnerable clients come in," said Mona Hassannia, manager of Settlement Orientation Services (SOS). "… We've had a family come in with 10 children — imagine finding housing for a family of 12.

"One of the highlights for us is the fact we all work within the same building now, so it's easy to make referrals and work together."

Mona Hassannia, manager of Settlement Orientation Services (SOS), speaks about increasing numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers at Vancouver's Welcome House on Wednesday.
DAVID P. BALL/METRO

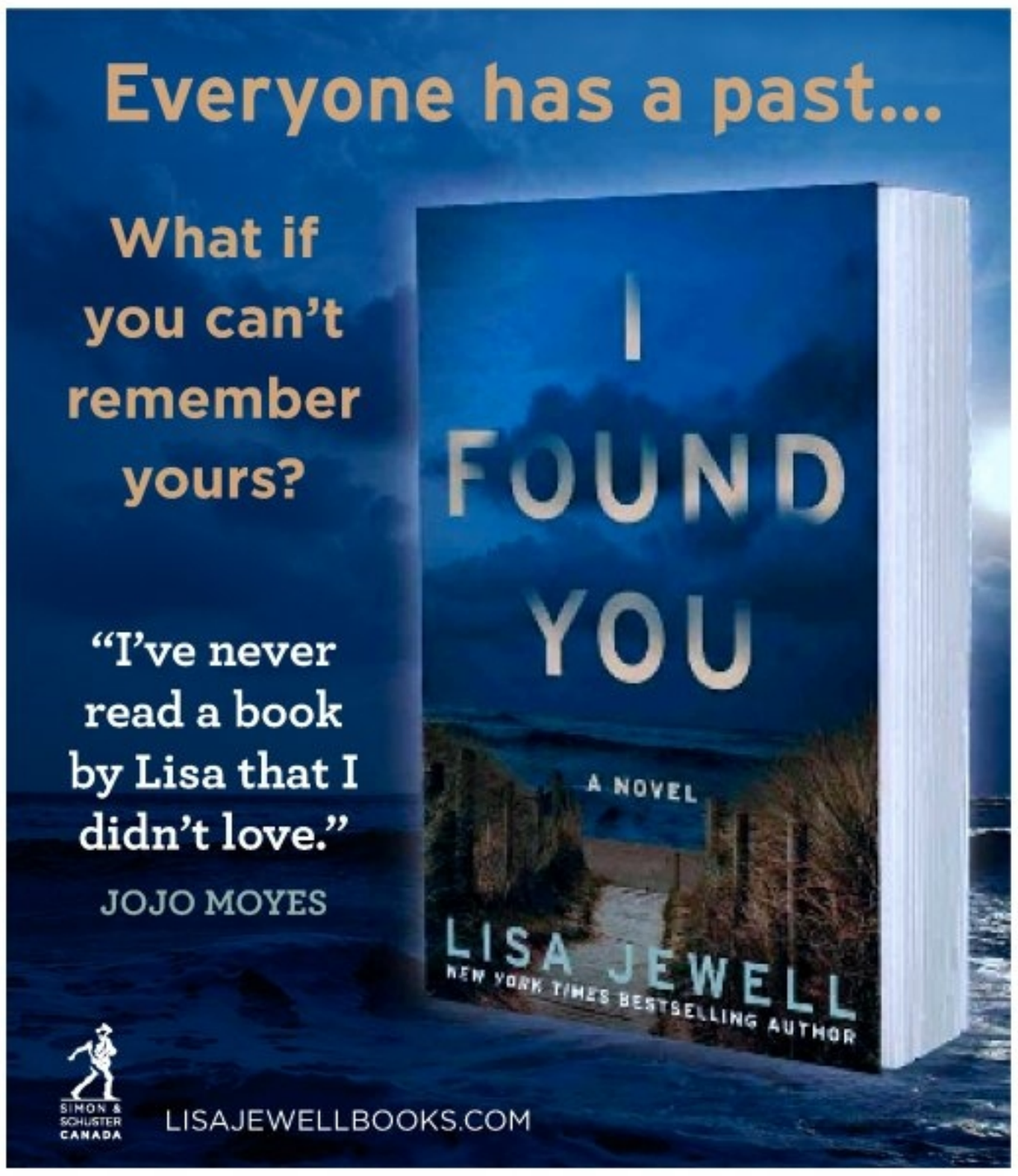
Vancouver DIGEST

Methans emissions and fracking linked
The volume of leaking methane emissions from oil and gas sites in British Columbia is at least 2.5 times higher than reported by the province, says a new report released by the David Suzuki Foundation. It says most greenhouse-causing gas comes from fracked liquefied natural gas.

Oil and gas industry emissions are now the province's largest source of climate pollution, surpassing commercial transportation, the report finds.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fight leads to stabbing
Police are investigating a fight and stabbing that involved a 15-year-old and a man, 32, on a BC Transit bus Tuesday on the city's east side. The teen allegedly stabbed the man before a bystander could intervene. A suspect is in custody and the victim has serious injuries. THE CANADIAN PRESS



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Saluting the '+' in Canada 150+

INDIGENOUS HISTORY

Festival, canoe trip and walk to honour First Nations' legacy

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

Canada150+ festivities this summer will include a weeklong festival in the parking lot across from Queen Elizabeth Theatre, a canoe gathering, and a reconciliation walk through Downtown Vancouver, organizers announced Wednesday.

The festivities mark 150 years since confederation but the "+" symbol acknowledges the thousands of years of Indigenous history and the devastation Aboriginal people experienced at the hands of the Canadian government.

That's why this summer will take both a solemn and celebratory tone, said Rhiannon Bennett, president of the Pulling Together Canoe Society and member of the Musqueam Nation. "It's really difficult to celebrate occupational removal of the Indigenous people and the genocide that was created so that Canada could be born," she said.

"But when you put that plus symbol there, it really shifts the whole conversation and acknowledgement of Canada's history."

First Nations canoes completing the last leg of Tribal Journeys, an annual event celebrating native culture in, B.C. in 2008. There will be another canoe trip for Canada's 150+ birthday and reconciliation walk. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

She will be in one of 30 canoes paddling from Sechelt to Vancouver, with a stop in Vanier Park on July 14 for a ceremony and feast. People from First Nations and Public Services Agencies will participate in the 10-day paddle.

The canoe is an important symbol in Coast Salish culture because the Fraser River acted as the region's "highway", said Bennett. "We had canoes for fishing, canoes for travelling, ocean canoes, river canoes. The water is the heart of our territories."

> It's really difficult to celebrate occupational removal of the Indigenous people and the genocide that was created so that Canada could be born.
>
> Rhiannon Bennett, member of the Musqueam Nation

"(Canada150+) presents an opportunity to present a direct tie between human beings," said artistic director Margo Kane, referring to those who want to raise awareness of the generational trauma of residential schools and those who want to celebrate Canada's birthday.

The second signature event for Canada150+ is The Drum Is Calling Festival from July 22 to 30 at Larwill Park.

There will be performances from award-winning artists, food, and workshops on carving and weaving.

EMPLOYMENT

Living wage in B.C. $20 per hour

An hourly living wage in Vancouver is $20.62, according to a new report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

That's how much someone living in Metro Vancouver would have to earn in order to cover basic expenses like rent, child care, food and transportation, the centre says. B.C's current minimum wage is $10.85 per hour.

Families making less than living wage have to make unfair tradeoffs like heating the house or buying groceries, the CCPA report states. And children often suffer — one in five children in B.C. live in poverty. About 80 B.C. employers have committed to paying workers at least a living wage.

An annual salary based on living wage would calculate out to be $37,528.

CCPA's living wage is based on a two-parent family with two school-aged children.

WANYEE LI/METRO

Dam expensive.

Site C Dam

Site C is projected to cost $8.8 billion, a massive public debt that will take taxpayers and ratepayers 70 years to pay off. BC Hydro is already planning to raise rates 28% over the next five years; Site C costs will be added to that once the dam is operational.

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Source: Hendriks, R., Raphals, P. and K. Bakker (2017) Reassessing the need for Site C. Program on Water Governance, University of British Columbia: Vancouver.

Authorized by the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, registered sponsor under the Election Act, 523 Cedar St. Nelson, BC

Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

PVEA

Forts forged bond amid panic of fire

FORT MCKAY

Community of 1,000 saw its population swell overnight

Alex Boyd
Metro | Edmonton

Loretta Boucher, vice president of Sakasteew Transportation, jumped into action the night of the fire. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Fort McKay First Nation is the sort of sleepy community where birds chirping and dogs barking are what pass for noise pollution — but as Loretta Boucher sat at her desk on a hot May afternoon last year, the town suddenly went "eerily" quiet, she says.

Not long after, the first truck rolled in.

On the day that turned towns all over the province into hosts, Fort McKay, north of Fort McMurray, opened its doors wider than most — over one frantic afternoon, the town's population swelled to several times its original size.

The night of the Fort McMurray fire, as many as 5,000 evacuees fleeing fire found refuge in the small community down the road, population just 1,000.

Boucher, vice president of Sakasteew Transportation, jumped into action, and soon all the buses from her family-owned business were on the road, shuttling people through town, to nearby camps, and out to the airport.

"It was extremely busy, there were people everywhere," she said. "It was tough. Lots of young families feeling lost, with nothing."

Boucher said it strengthened the ties between the two neighbouring communities. The town opened the arena, the school and the town office, and there was barely a house not sheltering an evacuee.

Many of the town's new temporary residents told Boucher they didn't realize it existed, or if they did know it, they had never visited.

"I'm proud to be from Fort McKay," she said. "Not only did it show people who we are, but we really came together."

> **We're steady, but it's not a good steady like it was before the fire.**
> Maxine Willocks

Maxine Willocks, owner of Fort McMurray café Chez Max, ended up in Fort McKay along with her husband and several staff after being unable to go south to Edmonton.

Before evacuating, Willocks had emptied her restaurant of supplies, and soon she and her cooks were handing out jerk chicken with rice and peas — her signature dish — in Fort McKay.

"They were very welcoming, very warm," she said.

Since that day a year ago, Willocks has made several trips back to Fort McKay, including for several catering jobs. She also now has regular clients that visit the restaurant when they're in the city.

"It certainly connected us, because Fort McMurray is so separated," she said.

But a year later, the tiny town still feels the impact of fire.

Workers who lived in Fort McMurray never came back, Boucher said, because their houses burned, or they're still dealing with stress.

The town's small businesses, like the transportation company her family has run for 15 years, are also feeling the brunt of a down economy that has affected the region.

"I'm not saying that we're suffering," she said. "We're steady, but it's not a good steady like it was before the fire."

Marital bliss after the flames

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Carlos and Carol Moran
JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Nearly a year after complete strangers put together a beautiful backyard wedding for Fort McMurray evacuees, Carlos and Carol Moran, the couple still can't believe the generosity of others in their time of need.

The couple was set to marry May 14, 2016 in Fort McMurray, but when the wildfire engulfed their Beacon Hill neighbourhood, damaging their home, the pair didn't think the wedding they'd planned would take place.

The Morans fled Fort Mac and headed to Edmonton — where, unbeknownst to them, locals who had heard the couple's story were planning an impromptu backyard celebration — complete with rings, a dress, flowers, a photographer and a cake — all planned out and organized by local wedding planner Wanda Rowe.

"Married life has been a blessing," said Carlos.

Carol said they wanted to plan another wedding upon their return home, but said they knew they could never surpass the experience they'd been gifted in Edmonton. As their anniversary approaches, Carlos said they plan on reaching out or doing something special for all those who made their wedding a success.

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Canada flees its tax havens

FINANCE

Experts say Panama Papers scrutiny 'may be paying off'

For the first time since 2011, Canadian businesses pulled their money out of tax havens, ending a five-year run when more than $120 billion was stashed in the 10 most popular low-tax or no-tax countries.

The newly released Statistics Canada numbers provide the most concrete evidence yet that the Panama Papers may have had a chilling effect on the use of tax havens to minimize corporate taxes.

"This could be a sign that global efforts to curb corporate profit shifting to tax havens may be paying off," said Dennis Howlett, executive director of Canadians for Tax Fairness, a group that lobbies for the closure of loopholes that encourage the use of offshore tax havens.

According to the government's official foreign direct investment statistics, Canadian businesses reduced their holdings in the top 10 tax havens from $272.4 billion in 2015 to $261 billion at the end of last year, bringing home $11.4 billion.

This reversal could be due to a number of different factors, including reforms in Ireland that make it harder to exploit that country to avoid taxes, Howlett said. But investment reductions in Luxembourg and Bermuda point to a wider trend.

"We know that public attention to this has affected calculation of risk, so companies are being more cautious now because of the potential for a public relations backlash," Howlett said.

Allan Lanthier, a retired senior partner at Ernst & Young and former chair of the Canadian Tax Foundation, cautions against reading too much into the numbers, as the majority of the reduction in foreign holdings in 2016 can be attributed to the fact that the Canadian dollar rose against the U.S. dollar, the currency in which most international investments are made.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Plans to replace wood with plastic in the town clock have caused a stir. METRO FILE

HALIFAX

Many ticked off amid race against clock fix

Yvette d'Entremont
Metro | Halifax

A tender call for work on Halifax's iconic Citadel Hill town clock has upset the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia.

At issue is the plan to replace the clock's wood columns and cornices with fibre reinforced plastic and its wooden windows with aluminum clad windows.

"Basically these are materials that would not have been in the original structure and which will appear very cheap and fake," said Andrew Murphy of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia.

"It's about respect for our heritage. The town clock would be in the top 20 or 30 iconic buildings in Canada and it's owned by the federal government. You would think that they would want to maintain it in an authentic fashion."

The heritage group sent a letter to Parks Canada officials on Monday. They're requesting specifications for that portion of the project be reviewed and redefined before the contracts are awarded

The tender closes on May 4.

"The federal government is spending very, very many millions on the Parliament buildings at Parliament Hill. Nobody is suggesting there that they replace it with concrete and mactac," Murphy said.

"One can always do something cheaper, but whether it's appropriate or not is an entirely different matter…It's an iconic tourism beacon for our region so we should probably make sure it looks good."

A Parks Canada representative returned Metro's call on Wednesday afternoon, but was unable to provide a response to the Heritage Trust's concerns by press time.

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Trump says he isn't pulling out of NAFTA

TRADE

White House vows nations will be 'stronger and better'

Justin Trudeau and Donald Trump take part in a joint press conference at the White House in February. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday told the leaders of Canada and Mexico that he will not pull out of the North American Free Trade Agreement, just hours after administration officials said he was considering a draft executive order to do just that.

The White House made the surprise announcement in a read-out of calls between Trump, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto.

"President Trump agreed not to terminate NAFTA at this time and the leaders agreed to proceed swiftly, according to their required internal procedures, to enable the renegotiation of the NAFTA deal to the benefit of all three countries," said the White House.

Trump said he believes "the end result will make all three countries stronger and better."

The announcement came hours after administration officials said Trump was considering a draft executive order to withdraw the U.S. from the deal — though administration officials cautioned it was just one of a number of options being discussed by the president and his staff.

Some saw the threat as posturing by Trump to gain leverage over Mexico and Canada as he tries to negotiate changes to the deal. Trump railed against the decades-old trade deal during his campaign, describing it as a "disaster."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AIRLINES

Death of giant rabbit another PR blow for United Airlines

United Airlines is reviewing its handling of a giant showcase rabbit that died after being shipped across the Atlantic from Britain on one of its flights, the latest in a growing list of customer complaints.

Distraught breeder Annette Edwards said a veterinarian had checked Simon — a three-foot-long continental rabbit — shortly before he was placed on a United flight from London's Heathrow Airport to Chicago's O'Hare.

Edwards said Simon is the offspring of Darius, which the Guinness World Records lists as the world's longest rabbit at 4 feet 3 inches (1.22 metres).

"Simon had his vet check just before getting on the plane," she said from Worcestershire in central England. "He was fit as a fiddle."

United spokesman Charles Hobart said the rabbit was moving around in its crate and appeared healthy when taken off the plane in O'Hare, waiting to be put on another flight to Kansas City. About a half-hour later, at the company-run pet facility, Simon seemed to be sleeping. Shortly after that, a pet facility employee found the rabbit dead.

"We won't know the cause of death, because we offered to perform a necropsy free of charge ... but the customer didn't want us to perform a necropsy," he said.

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CHANTAL HÉBERT ON O'LEARY LEAVING THE RACE

Even if he had been fluently bilingual, Kevin O'Leary would still have been a leadership disaster waiting to happen.

Businessman Kevin O'Leary says he is pulling out of the campaign to succeed Stephen Harper because he is not convinced he could carry enough votes in Quebec to beat Justin Trudeau in the 2019 election.

Fair enough. But chances are he would never have had the opportunity to test that proposition in a general election. Or to verify his attending presumption that voters elsewhere in Canada would rally to his flag. Lack of traction in Quebec stood to stop his nascent political career in its tracks as early as next month's Conservative vote.

Polls done for his own organization as the membership drive was coming to an end last month showed that a Quebec wall stood between O'Leary and the finish line. That wall looked insurmountable.

The reality-television star may have been the first choice of a plurality of Conservatives but he had little room to grow beyond that group. In Quebec — the province that counts for the second-highest number of leadership votes — he could not earn the support of more than about one in 10 members.

That this should have come as a surprise to some of the seasoned backroom advisers who backed O'Leary's candidacy is testimony to their powers of collective delusion. There has not been a successful federal leader who could not speak French fluently since Pierre Trudeau won the Liberal leadership in 1968.

O'Leary's abrupt exit may have saddened more Liberals than actual Conservatives.

But even if he had been fluently bilingual, O'Leary would still have been a leadership disaster waiting to happen. Up to a point, his shortcomings in French may have been the least of his liabilities — and a saving grace for the Conservative party.

For never has a leading candidate for the leadership of one of Canada's major parties brought so little policy depth to the task of applying for the job of would-be prime minister.

From the moment he entered the campaign, O'Leary consistently exhibited little understanding of the workings of government, the Constitution or for that matter the history of the party he was seeking to lead.

Joe Clark once described his vision of the Canadian federation as a community of communities. It is one of the rare parts of the former Tory prime minister's legacy that has survived his estrangement from the Conservative movement.

By contrast, O'Leary's concept of federalism was one that involved a punitive federal government imposing its will on its provincial partners through fiscal blackmail. He seemed to think the division of powers between Ottawa and the provinces was determined by the whims of the prime minister of the day.

Had Quebecers given O'Leary the time of day long enough to fathom his vision of the federation, his support would have fallen to single digits. I can't think of a Conservative premier from Alberta — past or future — who would put up with that approach.

O'Leary was never elected to office and he never seemed to think much of those who had done so, including his future Conservative seatmates.

He let it be known early on that he was unimpressed by the calibre of the people who sit in the Conservative caucus. The feeling was by all accounts mutual. The anybody-but-O'Leary movement was nowhere stronger than within the ranks of the MPs who would have had to serve under his leadership if he had won.

O'Leary's abrupt exit may have saddened more Liberals than actual Conservatives. Many of the latter are relieved that their party has dodged a bullet. In more than a few cases though, that relief is tempered by the notion that, in leaving, O'Leary may have cleared a path to victory for Maxime Bernier. His libertarian prescriptions may be as polarizing as O'Leary's persona.

The defunct O'Leary campaign recruited about 35,000 members. He is asking them to throw their support to Bernier. If they did, the result of the May 27 leadership vote would be a foregone conclusion.

But O'Leary's roots in the party are not deep and nor are those of many of his recently recruited supporters. Absent an organization to prod them into mailing their ballots, some may not bother to vote. A lot of others will follow their own guidance. One or more of his remaining rivals could still give Bernier a run for his money.

Still, there is no denying that as of now Harper's succession could be Bernier's to lose. As opposed to O'Leary, he does have a Quebec ace of sorts up his sleeve.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

BOWING OUT Kevin O'Leary's departure from the Conservative leadership race makes the job Maxime Bernier's to lose, writes Chantal Hébert. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pope Francis fails to bring the thunder in TED Talk

Vicky Mochama
Metro

Now that everyone is a thought leader, even the Pope is getting in on the inspirational slide-show business.

This week he gave a pre-recorded talk at the annual TED Conference in Vancouver.

It's a shrewd move for the Pope to join the think-fluencer crowd. Last week, Metro reported that more and more religious groups are getting into the digital game, from a church that live-streams its services to an American imam who is popular on Snapchat.

Ex-Pope Benedict XVI joined Twitter in 2013, but the Vatican has since expanded their social-media outreach. Pope Francis joined Instagram last year, which he announced by tweeting, "I am beginning a new journey, on Instagram, to walk with you along the path of mercy and the tenderness of God." It's mostly inspirational quotes and sunsets, but sure, same difference.

Speaking as someone who once took a nap after the arduous journey of picking an Instagram filter, I'm a little embarrassed that Pope Francis is better at this than I am. I still think, however, that he could do more.

If he really wants to reach out to diverse audiences, how about a mix tape? I can see it already: Pope Franci$ presents "What A Time To Be A Believer" with tracks like Big Rings (For Kissing) and a freestyle Latin Mass. While he has already released a progressive rock album (yes, really), I think he could get more mileage from a collab with DJ Khaled.

Because, let's be honest: the Pope's TED Talk was underwhelming.

TED Talks are all about show-stopper moments — cool science or key data points or emotional life stories — and this is the man who has an advantage over everyone. Instead of being a senior researcher who is trying to talk about visually resonant statistics and make people cry, the Pope has GOD.

The God I remember from vacation bible school — I had a thrilling childhood — doesn't do anything less than a full Las Vegas show.

And in the 18-minute-long speech, not once does he call upon the greatest magician's assistant one could have. He just chills behind a desk and asks us all to be better people. To whom do I have to pray in order to get a talking burning bush?

For example, in his TED Talk, he spoke directly to powerful people: "The more powerful you are, the more your actions will have an impact on people, the more you are called to be humble. If you don't, your power will ruin you, and you will ruin others."

It's all good and well to tell people about humility but, in my humble opinion (See, I learned), a thunderbolt would have ensured that the message struck the audience.

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Jonathan Demme, director of Silence of the Lambs and Philadelphia, dies at 73

Rainbows help deal with loss

SOCIAL MEDIA

Photos prompt discussion of miscarriages, stillbirth

In the photo, Zoe is sleeping, like newborn babies do.

It looks like any other baby photo, but there's a special message. The newborn is draped in a multicolour blanket, to signify this is a "rainbow baby" — one that followed the storm of a miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death.

"She's such a bright spot in the middle of the grey clouds," said Zoe's mom, Olympia Grigg.

"Rainbow baby" is a new way of talking about an old phenomenon countless women have experienced: pregnancy after loss. Though there's still little public discussion of miscarriage and stillbirth, experts say sharing rainbow baby images, especially on social media, may help parents cope with complex emotions many encounter when a new pregnancy follows a past heartbreak.

After 22 weeks of pregnancy with her third child, a son already named Jacob, Grigg went into early labour. At a normal checkup in June 2015, Jacob had a heartbeat. Several hours later he did not. Jacob was stillborn.

After she delivered Jacob, she and her husband left the hospital empty-handed, through a busy maternity ward where other families were celebrating.

"It was the worst walk I've ever taken," Grigg said. "I don't think anything that traumatic ever leaves you."

At nearly five months along, Grigg had been showing and everyone in her life knew she was pregnant. She had to explain to her two young sons there was no longer a baby in her belly.

The Grade 2/3 teacher became pregnant again in April 2016 but instead of just feeling elation, she held her breath. It was only when Zoe was born healthy could she exhale, said Grigg, 35. She asked her friend Joelle Mahepath, a newborn photographer, to take a few rainbow photos.

The image now hangs prominently on a living room wall. She likes talking about Jacob, though secrecy and silence still surrounds pregnancy loss, Grigg said.

"I remember thinking, 'I don't know anyone this has happened to,' " she said. When she posted her sad news on Facebook, she received private messages from friends who had also miscarried but never discussed it.

Maternal mental health expert Dr. Simone Vigod, psychiatrist lead of the reproductive life stages program at Women's College Hospital, said labeling a "rainbow baby" can be a way to make a loss a more visible one.

"If it helps people get the support they need, to feel validated, or helps articulate their feelings," that may help with coping."

Miscarriage is often treated as a routine occurrence and some women feel they can't talk about it or openly grieve, said Dr. Gail Robinson, professor of psychiatry and obstetrics/gynecology at the University of Toronto and director of the women's mental health program for the University Health Network.

Conventional wisdom dictates not divulging a pregnancy until after 12 weeks, so family and friends may not know a baby was expected at all.

"It's often difficult to get sympathy," Robinson said. With pregnancy after a loss, complicated emotions may be running high: grief, anxiety about getting pregnant again, fears of losing another baby, happiness, relief, guilt.

The term "rainbow baby" hints at the mix.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 in 5

According to the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, miscarriage occurs in up to one in five pregnancies. Stillbirths are rarer, at less than one per cent of live births.

Some parents drape newborns in multicolour blankets or clothing to signify this is a "rainbow baby" — one that followed the storm of a miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death. CONTRIBUTED

Inspired by her own DNA test, Claire Cameron has been captured by similarities between us and Neanderthals. She even sees childbirth as something "primal and raw as it was 40,000 years ago." CONTRIBUTED

Neanderthals, our ancestors

BOOKS

Our hunched, hairy cousins are a lot like us in new book

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

When Toronto author Claire Cameron took a DNA test designed to identify a person's ancient ancestry, she discovered that she is 2.5 per cent Neanderthal. The Toronto author was a little disappointed, as she had hoped for 4 per cent, the highest average trace of the DNA generally found in humans.

Although the last Neanderthals walked the Earth 40,000 years ago, the common belief for the past 150 years was that Homo sapiens killed off our hunched, hairy cousins, and there was certainly no comingling or sex involved. That is, until 2010, when a group of microbiologists led a project to sequence the Neanderthal genome, and discovered that indeed, the two groups had interbred.

Although scientists refused to speculate about how these relationships came to be, it fuelled Cameron's imagination.

"It was frustrating because you could see there was this big juicy story there," she says. "How the two groups could make contact, and under what conditions would they make contact without killing each other on sight?" Cameron realized that answering her hypothetical question would require a great deal of study, and so she spent five years scouring textbooks and any other materials she could find.

Her new novel, The Last Neanderthal, follows two narratives, set 40,000 years apart. There's Girl, the eldest daughter in a small matriarchal group led by Big Mother. A skilled hunter with a nurturing instinct, Girl is focused on survival for her family.

The second narrative follows pregnant archaeologist Rosamund Gale, who is leading an excavation in France where she discovered Homo sapien and Neanderthal bones together within an intimate proximity. Rose, facing the physical deadline of pregnancy and pressures from her museum employers, becomes obsessed with finishing the dig before giving birth.

"I'm using the modern story to comment on how we have definitely made advances, but we've also put women who are trying to survive and feed themselves by making money in a difficult position," says the self-declared feminist. "When you contrast that to ancient times, you can see that this is a choice, rather than something that's inevitable because of our biology."

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Dear White People is a study in nuance

THE SHOW: Dear White People, S1, E4
THE MOMENT: The intersection

As freshmen at their posh, mostly white university, Samantha (Logan Browning) and Coco (Antoinette Robertson) bonded over jokes: what they'd like to say to white people. Then Sam joined the Black Students Union, while Coco pledged a sorority. That tension explodes after Sam (who is biracial) accuses Coco of "overdrawing your bank account for that weave."

"You're the girl who didn't learn she was black until Beth Wheeler left you out of her second-grade sleepover because you'd be 'the only one,'" Coco says. "But with me, there is no confusion. People take one look at my skin and assume I'm poor or uneducated or ratched. So yeah, I tone it down. Make myself more palatable. What's so wrong with that?"

"Dear White People, you made me hate myself as a kid, so now I hate you and that's my secret shame," Coco accuses Sam.

"Dear White People, if you wanted to demoralize us with your European beauty standards, mission accomplished,'" Sam counters.

The Internet haters who perceived this series as one long scolding could not be more wrong. It's a study of endless nuance. Yes, it addresses white privilege because it addresses everything: how hue affects perception; the politics of interracial dating, and so on.

The show streams on Netflix.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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Be prepared for builder mortgages

FINANCING

Building a home very different from buying one

Kristen Thompson

After owning two homes in two different provinces, we thought we were 'in the know' on the mortgage process. Then we found our dream property on an unfinished lot, listed the home we owned for sale, and quickly learned that the mortgage we needed to build a house was very different than the mortgage we needed to buy one.

"With the real estate market being so hot, more and more people are considering … building new homes as an alternative to jumping into the market," says Rob Regan-Pollock, president of the Mortgage Brokers Institute of B.C. and an educator for the Canadian Mortgage Brokers Association.

"As ideal as this idea sounds to intrepid do-it-yourselfers, there are important considerations when it comes to financing the building of your dream home."

The first thing to understand is that builder mortgages come with more stringent lender qualifications, because lenders face additional risks including a longer time horizon during the build (where market values can fall), general liability, cost overruns, and that the lender only has a partially completed home as collateral security.

Kristen Thompson and family found their dream property on an unfinished lot in Kelowna, B.C., and built a home. CONTRIBUTED

Down payment: The fundamental difference between a standard and a builder mortgage is the down payment.

"Builder mortgages are advanced in stages throughout the building process," says Regan-Pollock, adding that they typically require a minimum of 35 per cent down on the value of the lot. "This means … 35 per cent of the land and building costs need to be set aside as down payment, rather than the minimum 5 per cent down for purchases of existing homes valued under $1 million."

Lenders also want to ensure that you have sufficient funds to get your build to 'lock-up', which is when the roof, doors and windows are installed.

What if I have an existing mortgage?: The ability to port a mortgage into a build depends entirely on whether your current lender offers builder mortgages, says Regan-Pollock.

"Most deposit-taking lenders, such as chartered banks, offer builder mortgages. In such cases, it's possible that your existing mortgage can be rolled into a separate tier under a builder mortgage program. If a build is planned, it's important to mention this at time of purchase, as penalties will apply to break your mortgage if you cannot port it into a builder mortgage."

Penalties, which include having to pay three months interest on an outstanding balance, occur on closed mortgage contracts, adds Regan-Pollock.

It may also be possible to refinance your current home to access a down payment, and concurrently qualify for a new builder mortgage, but this depends on your resources and location.

"In this case we suggest a builder mortgage be arranged, and when the build is nearing completion, the old home is sold, and the mortgage be ported to the new home to save penalties."

What are the terms of a builder's mortgage?: The terms of builder's mortgages vary depending on the lender, says Regan-Pollock.

"What is common to all lenders is the rate of interest during construction is almost always based on Prime plus basis, depending on risk," he says. "Risk premiums vary between a 1 per cent to 3 per cent added to Prime."

During the construction process, applicants' minimum payments will be the interest.

Final words of advice: "Retain a good mortgage broker familiar with the nuances of builder mortgages," says Regan-Pollock. "Most acquisition and builds can take anywhere from one to two years, so having the right team who can assist at the relational versus transactional level is key."

A good mortgage broker could have helped lead our family down that road, explaining the different options available for moving from one type of mortgage to another.

Though, now complete, my husband likes to tell people this is our forever home, if it doesn't pan out to be, at least we know how to move forward if we ever want to build again, and maybe next time we'll hire a broker.

The long and short of it: a look at long-term vs. short-term mortgages

Interest rates have nowhere to go but up. No doubt you've heard that line if you've bought a home or had to renew your mortgage at some point in the past decade.

Most homeowners in Canada prefer fixed-rate terms for predictability and peace of mind, with five-year terms being the most popular.

For those looking for greater protection against (eventual) rising interest rates, a longer term may be worth a look. A 10-year fixed rate mortgage today can be had for as low as 3.69 per cent.

Another reason to consider a longer mortgage term: a safeguard against the possibility of a housing crash. What happens if prices fall 20 per cent or more in the next few years, wiping away your home equity before it's time to renew?

A 10-year term, while more expensive than a shorter term, does offer a double-dose of protection in case prices fall or interest rates rise substantially.

Certified financial planner Ed Rempel doesn't buy the safety argument, saying that the risk of rising interest rates is "hugely exaggerated" in the media and by the mortgage industry.

"Long mortgage terms are marketed as 'insurance' to protect against a possible rise in interest rates. But most people are not good at math and don't take into account the extremely low odds of a large rise, plus the huge cost of the insurance," says Rempel.

A five-year fixed rate mortgage costs around 2.64 per cent today, while a two-year fixed comes in at 2.29 per cent. Rempel says the difference doesn't sound like much, but on a $300,000 mortgage this 0.35 per cent premium costs $2,100 after tax for the first two years.

"This is expensive insurance to protect against a highly unlikely event," he says.

If long-term mortgages offer peace of mind (for a premium), a short-term mortgage — such as a one-or-two-year term — gives homeowners the opportunity to save money in exchange for a bit of uncertainty when it comes to future interest rates.

With a one-year term, for example, homeowners get more flexibility because they can renew their mortgage in 12 months instead of in three to five years. At that time they can renew into another one-year term, lock-in to a longer-term fixed term, or take a variable rate at presumably a better discount than today.

Those who opt for a one-year fixed rate can also lock-in their renewal rate in just six to nine months — they don't have to wait a full year.

So why don't more homeowners choose a one-year term? According to data from Mortgage Professionals Canada, just one in 16 borrowers take a one-year fixed rate mortgage.

Rempel says that's because people don't want the headache of renegotiating every 12 months. But it could be a mistake to give up that negotiating power, he suggests.

"From a financial planning perspective, I find that most people can benefit from some type of refinancing every two years," he says. ROBB ENGEN

BOTTOM LINE

Despite its popularity, the five-year fixed rate could be the least advantageous term for borrowers. Those looking to save the most money year-over-year may consider a short term of one-or-two years, while homeowners looking for maximum peace of mind could find comfort in a 10-year mortgage term.

Most homeowners in Canada prefer fixed-rate terms for predictability and peace of mind. ISTOCK

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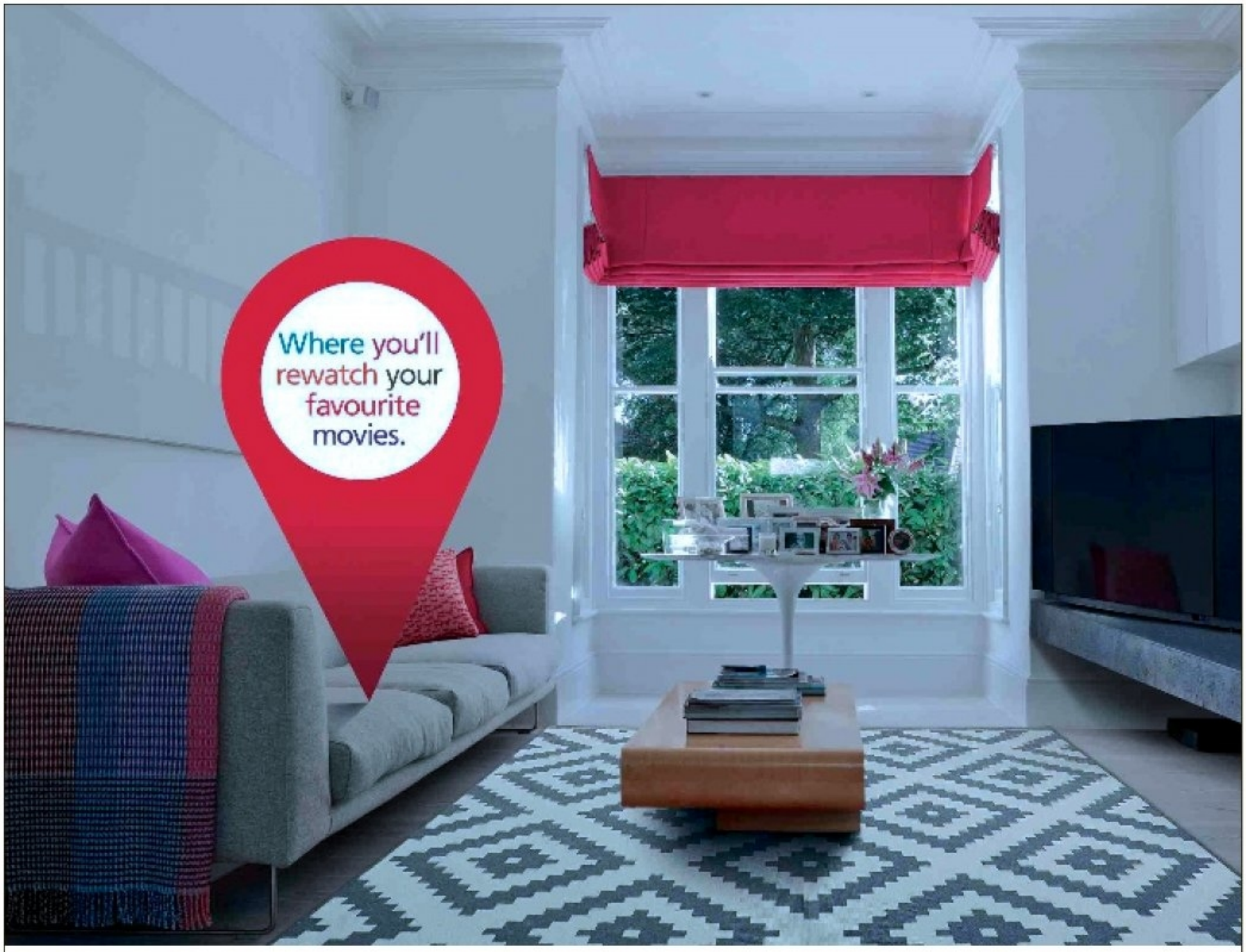

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Stress test your mortgage

FINANCIAL FITNESS

Know how rate changes could impact your budget and overall lifestyle

Camilla Cornell

Last summer, with a baby on the way, Andrew Thompson and Marie-Andrée Furlong of Victoria, B.C., began looking for a home. "We were in an 18-and-over condo building," says Thompson. "And although I know that's kind of unenforceable, I didn't want to be in a legal battle with my neighbours."

But neither did the couple want to bite off more than they could chew. They were determined to put at least 20 per cent down on their mortgage so they could pay it down over 30 years, if necessary, and avoid the CMHC (Canadian Mortgage Housing Corp.) insurance fees for a high-ratio mortgage.

"The plan is to pay it down as aggressively as possible," says Thompson. "But we'd like to have a life and raise our kid on something other than cat food," Thompson says. "And you never know what will happen in future."

The upshot: instead of buying in central Victoria, the couple chose a property just outside the city in Saanich "where the market wasn't quite so hot." Their son Arlo (born a month ago) will have a backyard and even a tree house. And, even if interest rates go up, or one of them experiences a job change, Thompson and Furlong will have payments they know they can afford.

It's a wise approach, says Wade Stayzer, vice-president sales and service with Meridian Credit Union in St. Catharine's, Ont. Under new rules introduced last fall, new homebuyers, who are required to get CMHC insurance, must stress test their mortgages — essentially qualifying at an interest rate about 2 per cent higher than what is available on the market. The rules are intended to ensure that if mortgage rates rise, homeowners won't be forced to default.

But although the rules only apply to high-ratio mortgages (when you have less than a 20 per cent down payment), Stayzer says stress testing your mortgage is a wise tactic for pretty much any homebuyer. He suggests using Meridian's online mortgage calculator to test "how your mortgage would react to a 1 or 2 per cent change in interest rates and what impact that would have on your lifestyle and your financial fitness."

> **You don't want to be so house poor you can't furnish your house and you can't do anything else but stay home**
> Wade Stayzer, Meridian Credit Union

Regardless of how much a lender is willing to loan, says Stayzer, you should have a firm grasp on your budget and what you can really afford. "On top of your mortgage payment, there are a whole lot of other expenses associated with home ownership, from closing costs to property taxes, landscaping and maintenance costs," he says. "You don't want to be so house poor you can't furnish your house and you can't do anything else but stay home."

You should also have access to either emergency funds or a line-of-credit in case there's a change in your income. "Ask yourself questions like: 'If I'm on mat leave for a year on a reduced income, what impact does that have?'" Stayzer suggests.

Finally, protect your asset with mortgage insurance or cheap-term life insurance. "The last thing you want your family to have to deal with if you're no longer on this earth is where they're going to live," says Stayzer. "Even if you're young, you never know what will happen tomorrow."

Andrew Thompson and Marie-Andrée Furlong of Victoria, B.C., moved from a Victoria condo to a property just outside of the city to provide a house with a backyard for their newborn son, Arlo. CONTRIBUTED

Homebuyers increasingly choose to fly solo

With more and more Canadians choosing to buy houses on their own, experts advise potential buyers to establish how much they can afford in advance, and consider renting out a room or basement to help pay down the mortgage more quickly. ISTOCK

When Liz Falconer, 48, first took on solo home ownership back in 1997, she admits she was "terrified". Her marriage had just ended and she had a young son to provide for. "The mama bear in me kicked in," she says. "We needed a safe home." So she bought her husband out of their Toronto house.

She has never regretted the decision. In fact, just two years later, she took on another mortgage — this time for a cottage property in Thornbury, Ont. for personal use and to let — just before quitting her job and launching her own ad agency. Her thinking: "Better to get a mortgage now while I have a job, because I won't get one once I'm self-employed."

That led to a spate of homebuying which saw Falconer own and rent out an additional four properties at one point. "It may seem like twisted logic," she says. "But in some ways, you have to take more chances when you're single. You have to find ways to replace that other income."

Falconer is among a growing cohort of Canadians opting to fly solo when it comes to home ownership. A new TD survey found single homeowners represent nearly a quarter of Canadians buying or intending to buy a home.

"Often the decision is driven by unexpected life circumstances," says Marc Kulak, associate vice president of real estate secured lending at TD Canada Trust. Nearly seven in 10 divorced homeowners and a third of those widowed, said they'd be likely to purchase a home on their own. And two-thirds of single Canadians said they'd buy a house solo. "Sometimes people don't meet their life partner and settle down until later in life, but they don't want to delay getting into the market while waiting for a partner," says Kulak.

And, he points out; buying a home on your own doesn't necessarily mean living alone. When Kulak bought his first home in East Gwillimbury, Ont., 12 years ago, he was single, but he took on a roommate. "Having that rental income can really help you pay down the mortgage more quickly," he says. "But I think it's important that — when qualifying for a home — you can carry the mortgage without the rental income. That gives you the flexibility to decide (if) a roommate or tenant is not for you."

Before getting caught up in a house search, Kulak advises seeking solid financial advice to figure out how much you can really afford. TD's mortgage affordability calculator takes into account the myriad costs many new homeowners forget about, from property taxes to home insurance and ongoing maintenance.

It's also a good idea to enlist a "home-buying buddy" to "provide that objective voice as you visit properties, negotiate and close on a new home," says Kulak. His parents fulfilled that role for him.

Finally, it's crucial to safeguard what is probably your biggest asset. That means getting homeowner's insurance that will protect you under various circumstances. CAMILLA CORNELL

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METRO SPACES

THE GATEWAY TO THE CITY

CONTRIBUTED

When you're buying a new home in Metro Vancouver, location is everything.

ViewStar, a new collection of condos and townhomes in Richmond, can be your gateway to a connected West Coast lifestyle, according to Ronald Leung, VP of marketing at Yuanheng Holdings, the developer of ViewStar.

The master-planned community, located adjacent to the future Capstan Canada Line Station in Richmond, will include exclusive one-to-four-bedroom residences and townhomes that are perfect for families and those looking for a little room to grow and access to green space, while still maintaining an urban lifestyle with easy access to the transportation, shopping and entertainment they want.

"ViewStar makes the most of the region's beauty," says Leung. "You're close to everything you need, yet you're also close to the serenity of the Fraser River, Richmond's beautiful parks, views of the mountains, and the natural surroundings Metro Vancouver has to offer."

Yuanheng, the developer of ViewStar, has grown as a premier independent developer since 2004, specializing in the local community.

Location is incredibly important for ViewStar. The community will be located on No. 3 Road just minutes from the Vancouver International Airport. It's a great place to live for frequent flyers. When you're living at ViewStar, you'll have easy access to fast, reliable public transit — the future Capstan Canada Line Station will be just across the road. It's valuable accessibility that will give you a fast and easy commute into downtown Vancouver.

At ViewStar you can live, work and play without leaving home. The master-planned community promises to deliver a plethora of rich options, including opportunities for residents to get fit, meet their neighbours and enjoy the community.

Yuanheng has reserved 13,000 square feet for amenity spaces. In addition to the swimming pool, fitness room, sauna, steam room, and yoga and dance studio, ViewStar also offers Resident-exclusive meeting rooms, music practice rooms, children's party rooms, multipurpose rooms, private dining rooms are just some of the proposed features — perfect for when you need a little extra space to host a gathering for work or pleasure. The study room will come with custom-built workstations to give residents the ideal quiet study location.

On the rooftop, you'll find a place to relax, find peace and enjoy the views. The terraced rooftop gardens and elevated central park will provide a green haven in the city.

Yuanheng carefully selected ViewStar's location to create three distinct neighbourhoods within the master-planned community: the Northside residences, the Southside residences and the exclusive Riverside residences.

Within the development, residents will be able to access retail and office space.

The ViewStar sales centre is opening near the end of May, and sales are set to start at around the same time. Interested buyers are invited to register online for priority access at viewstar.ca or call 604-285-9983.

CONTRIBUTED

CONTRIBUTED

Contributing to the community

ViewStar isn't just bringing an eye-catching new home development to Richmond, it's also contributing to the community.

As part of its development, ViewStar will be donating a state-of-the-art community centre to the City of Richmond. The 35,000 square-foot community centre will be named City Centre Community Centre North, and will be integrated into the master-planned community. The new community centre is designed to serve the diverse residents of Richmond's Capstan Village and the surrounding community, providing a central gathering place that will contribute to the growing vibrant city.

The centre's facilities will take shape in the form of a Village Square, providing special programs and services for people of all ages and abilities.

ViewStar residents will be able to play basketball, volleyball, badminton and more at the Village Square Sports Hall. Or they can talk a walk during months of rainy weather or for short track training on the indoor two-lane running track. Meanwhile, the Active Studio with its extra-high ceilings, will provide a place for dance classes and wellness programs.

If you're a "maker," this facility has just the place for you. People of all ages can participate in hands-on activities in the Technology Room, which will host activities including art, electronics, robotics, music, crafts, kinetic sculptures, fine art, computers, quilting, farming, engineering, and multimedia projects.

The Children's Exploration Room is the place for fun, interactive play, with a Mini Exploratorium connected to the lobby, providing daytime and after-hours programming for younger and older children.

The facility's many multipurpose rooms were designed to host community activities of all kinds, so residents at ViewStar will have the chance to watch, learn and participate in activities year-round.

To accompany the Village Square development, Yuanheng is also building a 4,277-square-metre city-owned riverfront park and dike. The new public space will provide serene views of the river — the perfect place to unwind and enjoy the community.

VIEWSTAR

AN URBAN SANCTUARY

Tranquil pathways that lead to the riverfront dyke trail, rooftop gardens and an exclusive private park, this is a hidden gem that is nestled within a dynamic urban centre. It is this unique fusion of the natural world with the vibrancy of city life that redefines what it means to live in Richmond.

ViewStar is home to over 130,000 sq. ft. of amenities that together form a sanctuary from the everyday, a world to share with family and friends, a world that once experienced, you will never want to leave.

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SALES & MARKETING: RAZOR PROJECTS

Homebuyers turn to Pitt Meadows for affordable homes

Pitt Meadows is one of the Lower Mainland's fastest-growing communities, and its mix of affordability and livability are increasingly attracting homebuyers, according to John Alty, Remax sales agent for Orion, a new condominium development now selling in Pitt Meadows.

"Pitt Meadows holds a special status in the Lower Mainland — it's a beautiful natural setting where new home buyers, families and downsizers can find the space and affordability they're looking for, which is very appealing," he says.

He says that many homebuyers who purchase on the resale market may need to make an offer that's far higher than the list price.

"When you buy at Orion, you're buying a new home at today's prices," says Alty. The homes at Orion are slated to be move-in ready for fall of 2018.

The development's 82 residential units come in a range of sizes and prices, so there's something for everyone.

They range from one-bedroom-and-den homes at about 750 square feet, to very spacious three-bedroom-and-rec-room plans at 1,320 square feet. Prices start at $299,900, and the project is now more than 50 per cent sold.

Fine finishes come standard at Orion, so what you see in the show homes reflects the finishes you'll find in your own home, including high-quality laminate flooring, quartz countertops throughout, contemporary laminate soft-close cabinetry, a full Whirlpool stainless steel appliance package and more.

The quality extends outdoors too. The building is beautiful and contemporary styled with large patios and decks, and Orion has a large, beautifully landscaped courtyard for residents to enjoy.

When you're living at Orion, you'll have a convenient lifestyle. Meadow Town Shopping Centre and Westgate Shopping Centre are close at hand, and Meadow Vale Shopping Centre with its grocery store, shops, restaurants and services, is located right next door to Orion — within walking distance.

This great location offers easy access to Lougheed Highway, Pitt River Bridge and the Golden Ears Bridge, West Coast Express train and transit to the Coquitlam Skytrain Station.

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Your essential daily news

Venice, Los Angeles compound where Californication was filmed sold for record-breaking $14.6M

MEET THE CONDO

Move into a modern mixed-use mid-rise

CONTRIBUTED

Project overview

Sorrento West's mid-rise tower is part of the second phase of a major development project helmed by Pinnacle International in the heart of Richmond. It features a mix of residential, commercial and office space, with remaining units starting from $429,900. It is estimated for completion between winter 2017 and spring 2018.

Housing amenities

Sorrento West provides residents with essential entertainment and self-care needs right outside their front door. The building features an exclusive rooftop garden, spa-inspired fitness centre and gymnasium with a sauna and steam room. Other offerings include access to a theatre, lounge, hot tub and much more.

Location and transit

For public transit riders the Canada Line is the best option with Aberdeen and Bridgeport Stations nearby connecting residents deeper into Richmond, or north towards downtown Vancouver. For those with automobiles, connecting to major throughways is a few minutes away.

In the neighbourhood

Richmond is a culturally diverse city with plenty of award-winning restaurants and entertainment nearby. Lansdowne Centre is one stop away from the nearest Canada Line SkyTrain Station and the new luxury outlet mall currently under construction will offer fine dining and high-end shopping.

NEED TO KNOW

What: Sorrento West
Developer: Pinnacle International
Designer: Bingham Hill Architects
Location: 8633 Capstan Way, Richmond
Building: Mid-rise, mixed-use residential/commercial
Models: One, two and three bedroom plus den
Sizes: From 532 square feet
Pricing: Starting at $429,900
Status: Selling
Occupancy: Winter 2017/ spring 2018
Sales centre: 8633 Capstan Way
Phone: (604) 303-0148
Website: pinnacleinternational.ca/communities/SorrentoWest

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Designers on all the uses for olive

INTERIORS

Mid-century tones meet sculptural wood designs

Olive trees, native to the Mediterranean region, are among nature's oldest and they look it. Gnarled, brawny trunks, a crown full of silvery leaves and clusters of tiny green fruit give olive trees an Old World look. Designers have lately been warming to the tree, its wood and olive hues.

Outdoors, olives are hardy through zones 8-11 and zone 7 if you can protect them from wind. North of that, you'll need to bring them in for the winter.

Olives are fast growers and prolific fruit-bearers outdoors, if given favourable conditions. Don't over-water, prune the inside branches so the whole tree gets lots of light and increase the pot size after a year. Dwarf varieties are easy to grow in a pot or basket, if given decent light.

Right now, Pottery Barn is offering fresh olive branches and dried lavender in an aromatic wreath. The retailer also has San Francisco photographer Lupen Grainne's soft-focused close-up of an olive branch as wall art.

Olive wood

The wood's distinctive characteristics — its smooth density and interesting grain pattern — have made olive furniture and accessories popular.

"There's a great sculptural quality to olive wood — a simple bowl becomes an elegant art piece," says New York City interior designer and artist Mike Harrison.

Retailer Homegoods is offering a sphere crafted from olive wood, as well as a curvy side table and various bowls.

Olive wood serveware can be especially nice. A beautifully turned wooden spoon, with the grain curving about the form, is a sensuous tool. Williams-Sonoma has a collection of utensils and cutting boards, as well as pinch bowls and lidded salt keeper.

The colours

Olive's wide array of hues allows for versatility in decorating.

Its place in mid-century modern's colour covenant has made it a popular paint hue the past few seasons. It pairs well with other toothsome colours like chocolate, orange, raspberry, cream and mustard.

"Olive tones are timeless, and green is an important colour in 2017," says Sue Wadden, colour marketing director for Sherwin-Williams. The company's Restless Olive packs all the punch of a zesty martini.

Benjamin Moore's Tate Olive, from its Historic palette, has a refined intensity. Spanish Olive dials the hue back to a more neutral position.

Olive pairs successfully with many other woods, and with mid- and light-toned stains, where its organic appeal gives the colour greater depth, says Stephanie Pierce of Masterbrand Cabinets.

Consider using the colour in family rooms, bedrooms and kitchens for a warm and welcoming vibe.

"I like seeing olive green tones used with dusty pinks and navy blue," says Wadden. "Because olive is such a quintessential food colour, people enjoy a positive association with this colour, especially in the kitchen. Olive tones are great on cabinets and furniture."

At Article, a stunning chesterfield sofa is upholstered in olive green velvet.

Other touches of olive

At Pottery Barn, vintage Turkish olive-gathering buckets, made of galvanized metal with symmetrical air vents, have a nice cottage-y look and can hold herb plants or fragrant milled soaps.

And then there's olive oil. There are hundreds of ways to enjoy its flavour, but there are other uses for it, too.

The folks at marthastewart.com recommend olive oil as a natural furniture polish, and a combo of oil and vinegar as a cleaner. A little oil on a clean rag will restore shine and protect from tarnish your stainless steel and brass items.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pottery Barn's Turkish olive harvesting pot can be filled with a household items or plants. Left: Article's tufted olive green velvet Chester sofa. ALL PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

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metro SPORTS

"She's a cheater and so to me ... I don't think a cheater in any sport should be allowed to play that sport again": Eugenie Bouchard on Maria Sharapova

Travis given Green light

NHL

Canucks turn to farm team for newest head coach

A chat toward the end of his playing career planted a seed in Travis Green's mind.

The veteran centre had already thought about staying in hockey after retirement when a conversation with Paul Maurice, then his head coach with the Toronto Maple Leafs, really got him thinking.

"We were just talking one day and he gave me the advice: 'You should be a coach,'" said Green. "It stuck with me."

Some 10 years later, Green was introduced as the 19th head coach in Vancouver Canucks history on Wednesday, tasked with injecting youth and increasing scoring for a franchise that has fallen on hard times.

The native of Castlegar, B.C., inherits a team that just finished 29th in the NHL and was near the bottom in several offensive categories, including setting a club record for futility with just 178 goals that led to the dismissal of Willie Desjardins after three seasons in charge.

"I know we have to create more offence," said Green. "Our special teams have to get better. I think there's a way you can create offence nowadays with the way the game is played, but that's definitely an area where we'll have to improve."

Green spent the last four seasons coaching Vancouver's top farm team, the Utica Comets of the American Hockey League. After retiring as a player, he joined the Portland Winterhawks as an assistant in 2009 before leading the club to the 2012-13 Western Hockey League title and an appearance in the Memorial Cup final as interim head coach.

Canucks president Trevor Linden, left, and general manager Jim Benning, right, introduce the team's new head coach, Travis Green, on Wednesday. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

14

As a player Green scored 193 goals and added 262 assists in 970 games over 14 NHL seasons.

Flanked by Canucks president Trevor Linden and general manager Jim Benning, Green's first news conference at Rogers Arena saw him field a number of questions about his style and approach, especially with young players, for a team that seems a long way from respectability.

"I'm not sitting up here saying: 'Hey, we're going to win the Stanley Cup next year,'" said the 46-year-old. "But I will tell you we're going to get better. We're going to start the process of building the right culture."

> **"There's pressure whenever you coach. I like challenges ... You learn a lot about your team when you have a challenge.**
> Travis Green

Part of that means getting young assets involved in Vancouver's rebuild.

The Canucks are still led by Henrik and Daniel Sedin, who turn 37 in September, but have a promising group of younger players led by Bo Horvat, Sven Baertschi, Markus Granlund, Ben Hutton and Troy Stecher.

Brock Boeser also impressed late in the year, while Jake Virtanen, another former first-round pick, spent most of 2016-17 with Green in the AHL working on his game.

Add to that the Canucks' acquisition of Jonathan Dahlen and Nikolay Goldobin prior to the trade deadline, as well as having the second-best odds of winning Saturday's draft lottery, and Green should have plenty to work with.

"We need to get younger, it's no secret," he said. "We need to infuse more young players into the lineup."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Predators draw first blood with road win

The Predators' Yannick Weber handles the puck against the Blues' Kyle Brodziak on Wednesday night. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

P.K. Subban had a goal and two assists and Vernon Fiddler scored with 5:05 left, sending the Nashville Predators to a 4-3 victory over the St. Louis Blues in Game 1 of their second-round playoff series on Wednesday night.

The Predators lost Kevin Fiala to an ugly leg injury in the second period and blew a 3-1 lead before Fiddler poked a loose puck by Jake Allen in the third. It was the fifth career playoff goal for the 36-year-old Fiddler, who did not play in Nashville's first-round sweep of Chicago.

GAME 1 In St. Louis

PREDATORS	BLUES
4	3

Colin Wilson and Filip Forsberg also scored for Nashville, and Pekka Rinne made 27 saves.

Colton Parayko, Jaden Schwartz and Vladimir Sobotka scored for St. Louis. Allen finished with 28 stops.

Game 2 is Friday night.

The Predators jumped in front when Wilson redirected a slap shot from Subban past Allen for a power-play goal at 11:24 of the first. It was Wilson's first playoff game this year after he missed the first round because of a lower-body injury.

It was still 1-0 when Fiala was hit by Blues defenceman Robert Bortuzzo and went hard into the boards behind the St. Louis net at 1:46 of the second. He left the ice on a stretcher and was taken to a hospital for further evaluation.

After the delay, Subban drove a shot by Allen from the right circle for his first of the playoffs at 2:22. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

A successful return for Sharapova after 15 months

Looking relieved, Maria Sharapova went through her familiar routine of waving to the crowd and blowing kisses after winning her first match on her return from a 15-month doping ban on Wednesday.

The five-time Grand Slam champion and former No. 1 beat Roberta Vinci 7-5, 6-3 in the opening round of the Porsche Grand Prix.

"It was the best feeling in the world," Sharapova said about stepping on court again for a professional match. "I have been waiting for this a long time." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tottenham beats Palace and trims Chelsea lead

Tottenham trimmed Chelsea's lead to four points again by edging past Crystal Palace 1-0 on Wednesday, with Christian Eriksen clinching the north London team's eighth successive Premier League win.

Top-scorer Harry Kane teed up Eriksen to unleash the dipping shot from around 25 yards in the 78th minute into the bottom corner of the net.

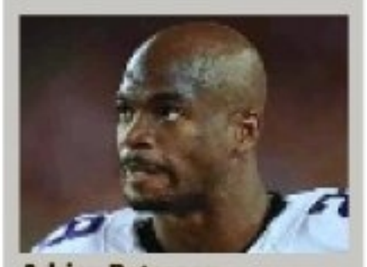
Tottenham's bid for a first title since 1961 rests on Chelsea dropping points on the five-game final stretch. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Peterson moves on with career in New Orleans

Adrian Peterson, the NFL's most productive running back for much of the past decade, has decided to head into the twilight of his career as a potential backup in New Orleans' pass-happy offence.

The Saints on Tuesday came to terms on a two-year contract with Peterson, who has posted seven 1,000-yard seasons with Minnesota.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Adrian Peterson

GETTY IMAGES FILE

IN BRIEF

Timbers' stadium extension
The Portland Timbers have unveiled plans for a privately funded addition to Providence Park that would add 4,000 seats.

The estimated cost of the expansion project is $50 million, paid for by the Timbers and National Women's Soccer League's Portland Thorns. It would add four levels to the east side of Providence Park.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Caps' away form upsets Williams

MLS

Defender happy with approach but efforts not yielding results

Sheanon Williams GETTY IMAGES

Sheanon Williams felt strange leaving Providence Park last weekend. With a 2-1 defeat to the Portland Timbers still fresh in his mind, the Vancouver Whitecaps veteran defender thought his team had done enough to get something out of the game.

"We had played so well and didn't come away with the result," said Williams, in his first season with the club. "We created more than enough chances to get at least a tie. I thought that's what we deserved — could have even won the game."

But while Williams is new to the West Coast, that losing sensation away from home is all too familiar for the Whitecaps.

Vancouver (2-4-1) has dropped all three of its road games in Major League Soccer so far in 2017 and has a solitary away victory dating back to last June, a 1-8-3 run that translates into just six of a possible 36 points.

The Whitecaps were 3-5-9 on the road in head coach Carl Robinson's first season in 2014 before a 7-7-3 mark, the best in MLS, helped propel them into second place in the Western Conference the following year. But a 4-10-3 away record combined with lacklustre home form in 2016 sent the club tumbling down the standings and out of a playoff spot.

"Every team in this league finds it very difficult to win on the road," Robinson said after training earlier this week. "We've got to try and pick up points on the road. The teams that are at the top of the table always manage to grind out even five (wins)."

> **We had played so well and didn't come away with the result.**
> Sheanon Williams

Travel and the varied climates across North America are usually cited as reasons why MLS clubs struggle in front of opposing fans. No club in the last two seasons has won more away games than it lost — New York City FC was 7-7-3 in 2016, while Toronto FC was 6-6-5.

Some coaches try to grind out draws on the road, as Vancouver did in 2014 with its nine ties, but the Whitecaps feel they're more suited to attack opponents away from home, similar to the style they try to employ at B.C. Place Stadium.

The results have just yet to materialize. "We go after games on the road. As I player, I'm OK with that," said Williams. "It shows that we're not afraid of anybody."

Whitecaps goalkeeper David Ousted said he likes seeing his teammates pressing on opponents' fields.

"Our strength is to possess the ball, to go forward and try to create chances," he said. "One win is better than two draws. If we go in with that mindset hopefully that will pay off in the long run."

Vancouver is hoping to cash in sooner rather than later with a trip to Montreal to take on the Impact (1-2-4) set for Saturday before a four-game road trip continues with visits to Colorado and Houston.

The Whitecaps' two away losses this season prior to the Portland defeat came with excuses after Ousted was sent off at San Jose before a setback against Real Salt Lake in a blizzard, but their road woeful road numbers over the last 10 months don't lie.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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IN BRIEF

Lynch coming out of retirement with Raiders
Marshawn Lynch is coming out of retirement after agreeing on a two-year deal with the Raiders that paved the way for a trade to his hometown team in Oakland.

Lynch passed a physical Wednesday and agreed to a restructured two-year contract. Those were the final steps needed before Seattle could trade his rights along with a 2018 sixth-round pick to the Raiders for a 2018 fifth-rounder. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Boston takes 3-2 series lead over Chicago
Isaiah Thomas and Avery Bradley scored 24 points apiece to help the Boston Celtics beat the Chicago Bulls 108-97 on Wednesday night and take a 3-2 lead in their first-round playoff series.

After the road team won each of the first four games, the Celtics won at home in Game 5 to earn a chance to eliminate the Bulls on Friday night in Chicago. A Bulls victory would force the series back to Boston for a decisive Game 7 on Sunday.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kerr's back maladies are 'fixable': Warriors GM
Golden State Warriors general manager Bob Myers fully expects Steve Kerr to find a solution to his debilitating health issues and be back on the bench without being forced out of coaching altogether because of complications from two back surgeries.

It just might not be right away. Myers says, "What he's facing is fixable."

The 51-year-old Kerr plans to be examined is away from the team until he feels better. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Cheesy Roasted Pepper Penne

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

If you love the sweet flavour roasting gives to vegetables then you'll put this recipe on repeat.

Ready in 35 minutes
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 500g penne
- 4 peppers (an assortment of red, yellow and orange)
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 1/4 cup olive oil, plus 1 Tbsp
- salt
- 1 large clove garlic
- pat of butter
- 1/2 cup shredded Asiago cheese
- big handful of fresh basil leaves, chopped

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 and prepare a baking sheet with non-stick spray.

2. Dice peppers into bite-sized pieces and slice shallots into strips. Toss with 1 Tbsp of olive oil and salt. Roast until tender and browned, about 15 to 20 minutes.

3. In a big pot of salted water, prepare pasta according to package directions. Before draining, reserve 1/4 cup of pasta water.

4. Place drained pasta back into the pot over no heat. Stir in reserved water, about 1/4 cup oil and pat of butter. Using a micro plane, grate garlic into pasta.

5. Stir in the roasted peppers and cheese. Stir in basil and then sprinkle the top with a bit more cheese, serve and enjoy.

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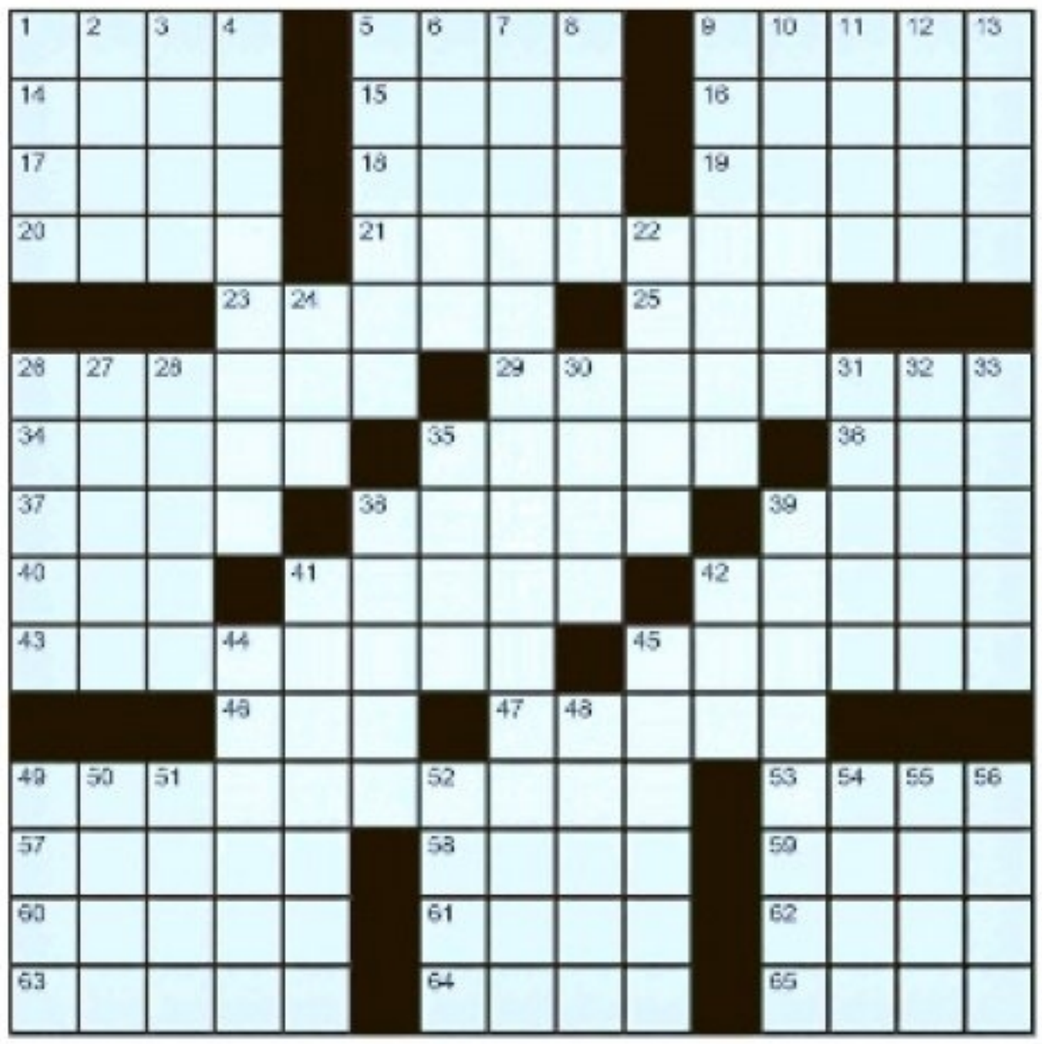
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Allied group
5. Curve
9. 1931: The Good Earth novelist, Pearl _. _
14. Prefix that means 'To the left'
15. Christian of 'Batman' movies
16. Vaclav _ (Playwright who was the President of Czechoslovakia in the early 1990s)
17. Santana song: "_ Ways"
18. Pet bat on "The Munsters"
19. Ms. Graff of "Mr. Belvedere"
20. "White Flag" songstress
21. Co-couples event for dinner and a movie: 2 wds.
23. Use a debit card
25. Arctic knife
26. Fancily-uniformed cavalryman of 15th-century Hungary
29. Sports: Wendel Clark was the first pick during it in '85: 2 wds.
34. Mr. Hawke
35. Sword fights
36. Scale's sixth sound
37. Currency in Oman
38. Lace-trimmed undergarments, for short
39. Chomp
40. Former
41. Sorts of freshwater fish
42. Army assistants
43. Depict
45. Canuck band, _ Fire
46. "Shallow _" (2001)
47. Pass on the information
49. In sports, hands are held in a T-shape for one: 2 wds.
53. "On the Waterfront" (1954) actor, Lee J. _
57. Pledges
58. Read, in Quebec City
59. Ms. Falana
60. _ truck
61. Exclusively
62. One-of-some in a delivery bag, for short
63. _-level position
64. Belonging to the singer of "Halo", to fans
65. Singer of "The Sweetest Taboo"

DOWN
1. Was cut, did this
2. _ Strauss & Co.
3. Roman love poet
4. Stupendous
5. Rules respecter
6. Really criticize: 2 wds.
7. Bryan Adams tune that goes "And the moon is out and the stars are bright...": 3 wds.
8. Music's Peaches & _
9. Brooke of "Suddenly Susan"
10. Town in southern Manitoba named after one of Norse deity Odin's sons
11. Iris's place
12. Rapper 50
13. Emily Carr book, _ Wyck
22. Quiet times
24. Criticize
26. Masada builder, _ the Great
27. Handy
28. Herring-like fishies
30. "Who does he think _ _!?!"
31. Ms. Valli of "The Third Man" (1949)
32. Destined
33. This stuff
35. Coat, as with plaster
38. Red Hot _ Peppers
39. Two-wheelers
41. In an unrefined way
42. _ Vos Prec (T.S. Eliot poetry volume)
44. Gum enjoyer
45. Garbage can areas downtown
48. Late's opposite
49. Sticky Scotch stuff
50. Mr. Lendl of tennis
51. State bordering Sask.
52. Clump of food
54. Eugene O'Neill's daughter
55. Norma's has a li'l 'Sunset'
56. Foundation

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
This month is an excellent time for you to buy wardrobe items for yourself. It's also a wonderful time to schmooze with others,

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You might want to cocoon at home more than usual or hide somewhere during the coming month, because solitude in beautiful surroundings will appeal to you. Enjoy the good life.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
During the month ahead, you will be more involved with younger people and creative, artistic types than usual. Share your goals and dreams with someone.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Relationships with bosses, parents and authority figures will be particularly warm and supportive for the next month. Some of you might strike up a romance with a boss.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Travel for pleasure will appeal to you in the next month. Do something to get a change of scenery, because your appreciation of beauty will be heightened.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Throughout the next month, gifts, goodies and favors from others will come your way. Lucky you! Keep your pockets open.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Relationships with partners and close friends will improve in the next month. This also is a good time to mend broken fences.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Many of you will make your workspace more attractive during the next month. Some of you will get praise, and a few will get a raise!

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Romance, vacations, playful times with children, sporting events and the arts will be wonderful sources of fun for you in the next month. Make plans to enjoy yourself!

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Go forward with redecorating plans for where you live during the next month. You also will enjoy entertaining at home.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You will notice more beauty in your daily world throughout the next month. You also will discover how much love there is in your everyday world.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Financial matters will bless you in the coming month. (You might boost your income in some way.) Many of you also will shop for beautiful things for yourselves and loved ones.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

	5		9	4	6		2	
4	3					5		7
				7			4	
8			6					2
3		4				6		1
9					4			5
	1			6				
5		6					8	3
	4		5	2	3		1	

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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9	1	5	2	3	4	6	7	8
4	7	2	8	5	6	3	1	9
3	8	6	9	7	1	2	4	5
7	9	1	4	6	2	5	8	3
2	6	3	1	8	5	7	9	4
5	4	8	7	9	3	1	6	2
8	3	7	6	2	9	4	5	1
6	5	4	3	1	8	9	2	7
1	2	9	5	4	7	8	3	6

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